REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-12 are pending in this application, with claim 1 being the only independent claim. Reconsideration of the rejection of dependent claims 11 and 12 in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claim 11, which depends from claim 1 recites "the cylinder comprises a lower attachment part formed with a circumferential groove, said bellows having a bead which engages said groove". Claim 12, which depends from claim 11, further recites "the bellows comprises a collar surrounding said bead and which extends radially from said bead, said collar having a radially outer edge portion that is loaded axially against the cylinder".

In the rejection of claims 11 and 12, the Examiner acknowledges that Keijzer and Funkhouser fail to disclose a bead and groove as recited in claim 11 and a collar with a radially outer edge portion loaded axially against the cylinder as recited in claim 12. The Office Action relies on Wode for teaching the limitation of claims 11-12. Applicant disagrees with the rejections of claims 11 and 12 because (1) Wode expressly states that reference character 1 is an end section of a beadless sleeve-type flexible member; and (2) the reference character 7, 8 in Wode is a radially plastically deformed clamping ring that is not axially loaded against a cylinder.

Wode discloses an air spring with a sleeve-type flexible member made of elastomeric material and having end sections connected to connecting parts by radially plastically deformed clamping rings. According to Wode, an end section 1 of a beadless sleeve-type flexible member 2 is pushed onto a step 5 on an end of a cylindrical projection 3, i.e., a roll-off piston 4 (see col. 2, lines 55-63 of Wode). A circular slot 6 is disposed below the end of the step 5 on the cylindrical projection 3 in which a projection 7 of a radially plastically deformed clamping ring 8 is received (col. 2, lines 64-69).

An upper end of the cylindrical projection 3 has a holding rib 9 and the clamping ring 8 has another holding rib 11 lying opposite the holding rib 9 (col. 3, lines 3-14). The clamping of the flexible member 2 by the clamping ring 8 is thus intensified by the ribs 9, 11 (col. 3, lines 15-19).

Since Wode expressly states that sleeve-type flexible member 2 is beadless, Wode fails to teach or suggest "the cylinder comprises a lower attachment part formed with a circumferential groove, said bellows having a bead which engages said groove", as recited in claim 11. Accordingly, claim 11 is allowable over the combined teachings of Keijzer, Funkhouser, and Wode.

Regarding claim 12, the Office Action alleges that Wode discloses a collar 7, 8 surrounding a bead and which extends radially from the bead, portion 7, said collar having a radially outer edge portion 8 that is loaded axially against the cylinder. However, Wode specifically describes clamping ring 8 as being radially plastically deformed. There is no teaching or suggestion that the element 7, 8 is loaded axially against the cylindrical portion 3. Since the clamping ring is radially deformed, Wode fails to teach or suggest "the bellows comprises a collar surrounding said bead and which extends radially from said bead, said collar having a radially outer edge portion that is loaded axially against the cylinder", as expressly recited in dependent claim 12. Accordingly, claim 12 is allowable over the combination of Keijzer, Funkhouser, and Wode.

In view of the above remarks, the subject matter of at least claims 11 and 12 is deemed to be allowable over the prior art of record and notice to that effect is solicited.

Should the Examiner have any comments, questions, suggestions, or objections, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned in order to facilitate reaching a resolution of any outstanding issues.

Respectfully submitted,
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